

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1, 12, 16, and 25 have been amended to clarify the subject matter regarded as the invention. Claims 1-30 are pending.

The examiner has rejected claim 1-4 and 7-30 under USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Provino. Provino teaches automounting directories for accessing remote file systems in a Microsoft Windows networking environment. Provino describes virtualization and mounting on the level of remote directories, not individual files (Col 8, Line 58 – Col 10, Line 14). Provino therefore does not teach “for each file in the virtual name directory and file hierarchy, data separate from the file system data of the underlying file system is associated with the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, the data including a metadata and a pointer to the file contents stored in one or more underlying file systems.” Support for the amendment can be found in the specification, without limitation, at page 5, lines 3-16, and page 17, line 20 – page 18, line 17. Thus, claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 2-11 and 13 depend from claim 1 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

Like claim 1, claim 12 has been amended to recite, “wherein for each file in the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, data separate from the file system data of the underlying file system is associated with the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, the data including a metadata and a pointer to the file contents stored in one or more underlying file systems.” Thus, claim 12 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 14-15 depend from claim 12 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

Like claim 1, claim 16 has been amended to recite, “wherein for each file in the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, data separate from the file system data of the underlying file system is associated with the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, the data including a metadata and a pointer to the file contents stored in one or more underlying file systems.” Thus claim 16 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 17-24 depend from claim 16 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

Like claim 1, claim 25 has been amended to recite, "for each file in the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, data separate from the file system data of the underlying file system is associated with the virtual directory and file name hierarchy, the data including a metadata and a pointer to the file contents stored in one or more underlying file systems." Thus, claim 25 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 26-30 depend from claim 25 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons described above.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested based on the preceding remarks. If at any time the Examiner believes that an interview would be helpful, please contact the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,



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